

## Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 AID-05

ACDA-05 /075 W

----- 072796

O R 211037Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8247

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0660

DELIVER TO NEA/ARN/DRAPER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS.

ALSO PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR DAY.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: POPP LEBANON REPORT

1. CITY OF DAMOUR FELL TO PALESTINIAN-LEFTIST FORCES  
LAST NIGHT. REFUGEES FROM THERE AND CHAMOUN'S NEEIGHBORING  
VILLAGE OF SAADIYAT, WHO REACHED JOUNIEH BY BOAT THIS  
MORNING, APPEAR TO HAVE HAD A SOBERING EFFECT ON MANY  
CHRISTIANS THERE WHO HAVE BEEN ENJOYING HEADY WINE OF  
APPARENT PHALANGIST-CHAMOUN MILITARY SUCCESS CAPPED BY  
YESTERDAY'S TAKEOVER OF QARANTINA DISTRICT. RIGHTIST  
ATTACK ON NABAA DISTRICT DID NOT REPEAT NOT TAKE PLACE  
AS MANY FEARED. STORIES OF HEAVY FIGHTING IN BEKAA  
AND AKKAR AREAS UP COUNTRY AND PRESENCE THERE OF PLA AND OTHER  
PALESTINIAN UNITS ALSO APPEAR TO BE SOBERING CHRISTIAN  
RIGHTIST ENTHUSIASM. INFORMATION ON WHAT EXACTLY IS  
HAPPENING UP COUNTRY IS, HOWEVER, SLIM, AS TELEPHONE AND  
TELEGRAPH LINES ARE FOR THE MOST PART OUT.

2. ARRIVAL OF KHADDA., SHEHABI AND JAMIL FROM DAMASCUS

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THIS MORNING HAS RAISED OUR HOPES OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL

SOLUTION, OR AT LEAST SUFFICIENT POLITICAL PROGRESS TO RESTAIN FURTHER MILITARY ESCALATION. WE HAVE RELIABLE REPORTS THAT FRANGIE IS CONTINUING TO MEET WITH CHAMOUN, GEMAYEL AND OTHER TOP CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED AGREEMENT WITH SYRIANS, WHO ARE ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE MOSLEM SIDE. WE ARE DISTURBED BY PRETTY RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT AT LEAST CHAMOUN AND PROBABLY ALSO GEMAYEL ARE STILL UNABLE TO SEIZE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION AND ARE PUSHING FOR REFERRAL OF MATTER TO THE UN, WHERE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN FRIENDS OF THE LEBANON ARE SUPPOSED TO PRODUCE NECESSARY SOLUTION TO LEBANESE PROBLEMS. WE ARE DOING OUR BEST THROUGH A NUMBER OF INTIMATES OF THESE LEADERS TO DISSUADE SUCH LINE OF THINKING AND SUPPORT SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND FRANGIE IS AT PRESENT PREPARED TO ACCEPT. I HAVE NOT PERSONALLY WEIGHED IN NOR INTEND TO UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD INSTRUCT, IN WHICH CASE IT COULD BE DONE THROUGH A PERSONAL OR TELEPHONE CALL WITH FRANGIE.

3. ALSO FOR FIRST TIME DATT HAS BEEN TOLD THERE ARE SERIOUS DOUBTS IN THE MINDS OF TOP MOSLEM ARMY OFFICERS AS TO ARMY'S ABILITY TO HANG TOGETHER. RIGHTIST TAKEOVER OF QARANTINA AND LEFTIST TAKEOVER OF DAMOUR, ACCOMPANIED AS THESE WERE BY WIDESPREAD STORIES OF ATROCITIES, SEEM TO BE HAVING PARTICULARLY PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT IN BRINGING HOME INTERCONFESSIONAL NATURE OF THIS CONFLICT. AUB'S PRESIDENT KIRKWOOD WAS ON THE PHONE TELLING ME OF SIMILAR FEARS AMONG FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT AUB WHO SEE THIS AS BEGINNING OF CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM FRATRICIDE BEYOND RIGHT-LEFT LINES THAT FIGHTING HAS GENERALLY BEEN BELIEVED TO TAKE UP TO NOW. HAPPILY AUB STUDENT BODY (WHICH IS ALMOST HALF OF ITS NORMAL LEVEL, OR ABOUT 2300 AT PRESENT) HAS NOT BEEN DIRECTLY HIT. LULLS IN FIGHTING WHICH OCCURRED TOWARDS END OF DAY YESTERDAY ALWAYS SEEM TO BRING OUT ROADBLOCKS, KIDNAPPING AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS ALONG PURELY CONFESSIONAL LINES, AND THIS IS UNSETTLING.

4. ABOUT THE ONLY HAPPY NOTE TODAY, APART FROM OUR HOPES FOR POLITICAL PROGRESS, IS FACT THAT SNIPER IN THE

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HOLIDAY INN HAS CEASED TO SHOOT IN DIRECTION OF EMBASSY. TANK BATTLE TOOK PLACE EARLIER THIS MORNING IN THE HOTEL DISTRICT AS WELL AS MANY OTHER PARTS OF TOWN, BUT AT THE MOMENT ALSO SEEMS TO BE QUIETING DOWN. WE SUSPECT THIS WILL BE ONLY TEMPORARY IN THE ABSENCE OF POLITICAL PROGRESS IN BAABDA. LAMBRAKIS

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